

Duties of the Montana Public Employees' Retirement Board

Two positions on the seven member Public Employees' Retirement Board expire March 31, 2008. One position must be filled by a PERS retired member. The other is an "at large" position. Individuals interested in serving on PERB should review § 2-15-1009, MCA, and be aware of the following information:

1. PERB meets the second Thursday of each month in Helena. Video conferencing is not available and participation by telephone has proved less than satisfactory to PERB members. Members are paid for travel expenses, and for their time spent traveling to and from Helena.

2. The PERB "packet" is mailed to PERB members a week prior to the meeting. The packet is often an inch to an inch and a half thick, and requires study prior to the meeting. Members are paid for one day of preparation.

3. Ad hoc PERB meetings occur three or four times a year. If the topic is limited, members may participate by telephone.

4. PERB has several committees, including Legislation, Personnel, Education, and Audit. Each PERB member serves on at least one committee. The Legislation Committee meets weekly during the session. Telephone participation is permitted.

5. PERB members may be interested in attending meetings of the State Administration and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee (SAVA), the legislative interim committee assigned to retirement issues. Members are not paid to attend SAVA meetings unless attendance is requested by the PERB President.

6. PERB members may be interested in attending meetings of the Employer Investment Advisory Council (EIAC), a council appointed by PERB to address education and investment issues. PERB members are not paid to attend EIAC meetings unless attendance is requested by the PERB President.

7. PERB is the fiduciary for all public employee retirement systems (except Teachers') and the state's 457 deferred compensation plan. The retirement systems include Public Employees' (PERS), Judges' (JRS), Highway Patrol Officers' (HPORS), Sheriffs' (SRS), Municipal Police Officers' (MPORS), Firefighters Unified (FURS), Game Wardens' and Peace Officers' (GWPORS), and the Volunteer Firefighters' Compensation Act (VFCA).

A. With the exception of PERS and the 457 plan, all retirement systems listed above are defined benefit plans.

B. PERS has both a defined benefit plan and a defined contribution plan.

8. Fiduciaries have several duties that must be exercised with the best interest of retirement system participants kept in mind. They include the duties to exercise care and skill; to act prudently; to act with caution and diligence; to act solely in the interest of participants and beneficiaries, for the exclusive purpose of providing benefits; and the prohibition of all transactions that pose possible conflicts of interest, or even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

10. The PERS defined contribution plan and the 457 deferred compensation plan require third party administrators, plan documents, and investment policies, all of which are subject to PERB review and approval.

11. The retirement systems have a disability component. Approximately 40% of every PERB meeting is devoted to determining whether a retirement system member is entitled to receive a disability benefit. This determination requires review of medical evidence, doctors' opinions, and consideration of often emotional testimony offered by our members and/or their families.

If you would like further information regarding functions and responsibilities of PERB members, please contact Roxanne Minnehan, MPERA Executive Director at 444-5459.